

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102 for being anticipated by Takahashi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,393,152).

Claims 7, 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103 for being obvious in view of Takahashi et al.

It is noted with appreciation that claims 5, 6, 8, and 14-16 are allowed.

It is further noted with appreciation that claim 2 is deemed to recite allowable subject matter.

Without conceding the rejection of claim 1, the claim has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, and claim 2 has been canceled. Accordingly, claim 1 and dependent claims 3, 4, and 7 are believed to be in allowable condition.

Independent claims 9, 10, and 13 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 2, without conceding the merits of the rejections of claims 9, 10, and 13. Since independent claims 9, 10, and 13 recite similar limitations as in claim 1, the claims as amended are believed to be in allowable condition. Accordingly, dependent claims 7, 11, and 12 are believed to be in allowable condition.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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